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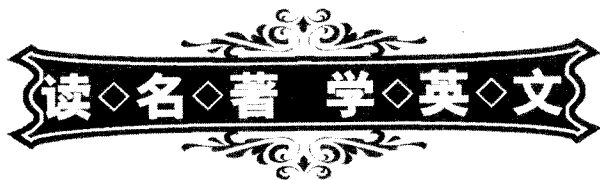
白衣女人

*The Woman
in White*

〔英〕威尔基·柯林斯 原著

袁 曦 编译

中国书籍出版社



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图书在版编目(CIP)数据

白衣女人 / (英)柯林斯 (Collins, W.) 著; 袁曦编译. — 北京: 中国书籍出版社, 2006.8

(读名著学英文丛书)

书名原文: The Woman In White

ISBN 7-5068-1464-1

I. 白… II. ①柯… ②袁… III. ①英语—汉语—对照读物 ②长篇小说—英国—近代 IV. H319.4; I

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字 (2006) 第 109281 号

责任编辑 / 游 翔

责任印制 / 熊 力 武雅彬

封面设计 / 李栋设计工作室—徐波

出版发行 / 中国书籍出版社

地 址: 北京市丰台区三路居路 97 号 (邮编: 100073)

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电子邮箱: chinabp@vip.sina.com

经 销 / 全国新华书店

印 刷 / 北京高岭印刷有限公司

开 本 / 889 毫米 × 1194 毫米 1/24

印 张 / 13.75

字 数 / 251 千字

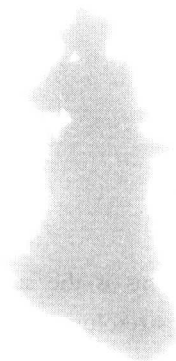
版 次 / 2006 年 9 月第 1 版 2006 年 9 月第 1 次印刷

印 数 / 0001 ~ 8000 (册)

定 价 / 23.00 元

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THE NARRATIVE OF
WALTER HARTRIGHT, OF
CLEMENT'S INN, TEACHER
OF DRAWING



住在克莱门特学院的画师
沃尔特·哈特莱特首先叙
述事情经过

第
一
部



CHAPTER I

This is the story of what a Woman's patience can endure, and of what a Man's resolution can achieve. The chief part of it will be told by those who know them best, so that the truth may always be given as directly as possible.

Let Walter Hartright, teacher of drawing, aged twenty-eight years, be heard first.

It was the last day of July. The fading summer left me out of health, out of spirits, and out of money as well. I had not been able to save as much as usual, and it seemed likely that I should have to stay in London and spend my autumn economically between my mother's cottage at Hampstead, and my own chambers in town.

The evening was still and cloudy. I put down my book and set out for my mother's cottage. It was one of the two evenings in every week which I was accustomed to spend with my mother and my sister.

I had hardly rung the bell, before the door was opened violently; my dear Italian friend, Professor Pesca, appeared in the servant's place; and darted out joyfully to receive me.

On his own account, and, I must be allowed to add, on mine also, the Professor merits the honour of a formal introduction. Accident has made him the starting-point of the strange family story which it is the purpose of these pages to unfold.

第一章

这个故事所讲述的是一个女人的耐性能够坚持的程度和一个男人的决心所能达到的目标。它的最主要部分将由最了解情况的人来分头讲述，这样事情的真相就可以自始至终被最直接地叙述出来。

现在让我们先听听二十八岁的画师沃尔特·哈特莱特的叙述吧。

那是七月的最后一天。随着夏天的消逝，我的身体变得虚弱，情绪也很低落，并且手头有些拮据。过去的一年，我没有像往常一样，对我的收入精打细算。看来，我只好留在伦敦，往来于我母亲在汉普斯特德的小屋和我在城里的住处，节省地过这个秋天了。

夜很寂静，天阴沉沉的。我放下书，动身去母亲那里。通常每星期我总要有两个夜晚跟母亲和妹妹一起度过。

我刚拉动门铃，门就猛地打开了，我亲爱的意大利朋友帕斯卡教授，出现在门房，兴高采烈地跑出来迎接我。

因为他和我本人的原故，现在很值得为这位教授正式作一番介绍。由于一件偶然发生的事，他就成了一位引出了以下我所要讲的这一离奇的家庭故事的人。

I had first met him at the great houses, where he taught his own language and I taught drawing. He had once held a situation in the University of Padua and had left Italy for political reasons. Professor Pesca had been for many years respectably established in London as a teacher of language.

Without being actually a dwarf—for he was perfectly well proportioned from head to foot—Pesca was, I think, the smallest human being I ever saw out of a show-room. The ruling idea of his life appeared to be, that he was bound to show his gratitude to the country which had afforded him an asylum and a means of subsistence by doing his utmost to turn himself into an Englishman. Finding us distinguished, as a nation, by our love of athletic exercises, the little man, in the innocence of his heart, devoted himself impromptu to all our English sports and pastimes whenever he had the opportunity of joining them; firmly persuaded that he could adopt our national amusements of the field by an effort of will precisely.

I had seen him risk his limbs blindly at a fox-hunt and in a cricket-field; and soon afterwards I saw him risk his life, just as blindly, in the sea at Brighton.

We met there accidentally and he went happily into the water, knowing nothing at all about swimming. Soon after we had both struck out from shore, I turned round to look for him. I saw nothing between me and the land but two little white arms, which soon disappeared under the surface of the sea. When I dived for him, he was lying on the bottom, in a hollow of shingle, looking by many degrees smaller than I had ever seen him look before. I was luckily able to take him back to the shore, where he slowly recovered from his misfortune. When he had thoroughly recovered himself, he poured out his thanks in excited words, declaring that I had saved his life and that in the future it was entirely at my service.

我最初是在几个大户人家遇到这位意大利人，当时他在那几家教意大利语，而我则在那里教图画。他曾经在帕多瓦大学任教；他离开意大利，是由于政治上的原因；他教授语言多年，在伦敦是一位很有身份的人。

虽然帕斯卡并不是一个侏儒，因为他从头到脚各部分都长得很匀称，但是，他好像是我在马戏团以外看到的最矮小的人。他一生的生活目标就是要竭力把自己改造成为一个英国人，以此表达对这个国家的感激之情，因为这个国家不仅为他提供了避难所，而且能让他维持生活。当他发现我们国家的人都特别爱好体育活动时，这个小矮子，凭着他的天真想法，从来不放弃任何一次参加我们英国人的各种运动和游戏的时机；他坚信通过努力就可以学会我们国家的各种户外运动。

我曾看到他不顾折胳膊断腿危险地猎狐狸和玩板球；此后不久，在布赖顿海滨，我又一次看到他不顾一切地拿生命开玩笑。

我们偶然在那里相遇，他很高兴地钻进水中，却根本不会游泳。我们刚从岸边游出去不久，我转身去寻找我的朋友。在我 and 海滩之间除了两只白色的小胳膊以外，我什么也没看到。它们在水面挣扎了一下，接着也不见了。等我钻下水去找他时，这个可怜的小矮子正躺在水底下，在沙石坑里蜷成一团，看上去比原来又小了许多。幸好我总算把他带回了岸上，他慢慢地从这场灾祸中醒了过来。等到他完全苏醒过来，和我一同回到海滩上的时候，他便用了许多激动的字眼向我表示了感激之情。他说，我救了他的命，他的性

He said he would never be happy again until he had found an opportunity of proving his gratitude by rendering me some service which I might remember to the end of my days.

Little did I think then that the opportunity of serving me was soon to come to him, and he was to turn the whole current of my existence into a new channel.

Pesca's face and manner, on the evening when we confronted each other at my mother's gate, were more than sufficient to inform me that something extraordinary had happened. I could only conjecture, while he was dragging me in by both hands, that he had some news to tell of an unusually agreeable kind.

"Now, my good dears," began Pesca, "listen to me. The time has come—I recite my good news—I speak at last."

He told us that at one of London houses where he taught Italian, he had been asked by the father of his pupils to find a drawing-master to go to a house in the country. He had said that he knew the very man and had then been given a letter which explained what the drawing-master would have to do.

The letter was plain, straightforward, and comprehensive, at any rate. It said that Frederick Fairlie, Esquire, of Limmeridge House, Cumberland, wanted to engage the services of a thoroughly competent drawing-master for four months to instruct two young ladies in drawing and painting, and to repair and mount a valuable collection of drawings. He would be paid four guineas a week. No one need think of applying for this situation unless he could furnish the most unexceptionable references to character and abilities. The references were to be sent to Mr Fairlie's friend in London, who was empowered to conclude all necessary

命交给我支配，还说，如果不能找一个机会为我做一件让我终身难忘的事的话，他将永远不会快乐，因为只有这样才能表达他的感激心情。

但让我没有想到的是，这个他能报答我的机会很快就来了；并且，他将我的整个生活纳入一条新的轨道。

那天晚上，我们在我母亲家门口见了面，单看帕斯卡的那副神情，我就知道发生了一件很不寻常的事。他拉住我的双手把我拖进屋子的时候，我只能猜测，他是要告诉我一件特别令人高兴的消息。

“喂，我亲爱的朋友们，”帕斯卡开始说了，“听我说，现在是时候让我宣布我的好消息了，现在我可要宣布了。”

他告诉我们，在他教意大利文的几座伦敦的豪宅里一户人家，学生的父亲托他物色一位绘画教师到他朋友的乡下庄园里教画。他说他恰好有一位合适的人选，于是他得到了一封信，信上说明东家给我开的条件。

信写得简单明白，但总的说来是面面俱到的。信上说，坎伯兰利默里奇庄园主人弗雷德里克·费尔利先生，要聘请一位有才能的画师，指导两位小姐学习水彩画，并利用课余时间修补和裱糊一批长期疏于照管的名画。聘用期为四个月，其待遇将为一周四几尼。凡有意担任上述职位者，必须提供有关本人品行与才能的最可靠证明书。证明书应寄交费尔利先生在伦敦的友人，

arrangements. These instructions were followed by the name and address of Pesca's employer in Portland Place.

The prospect which this offer of an engagement held out was certainly an attractive one. I knew this; I knew that I ought to consider myself very fortunate if I succeeded in securing the offered employment, and yet I felt unwilling, for some unexplained reason, to apply for it. Only the persuasions of Pesca, my mother and my sister at last overcame my doubts and made me agree to send in my application. But the doubts remained in my mind.

The next morning I sent my applications to the professor's employer in Portland Place, and a letter I received four days later told me that Mr. Fairlie accepted my services and begged me to start for Cumberland immediately.

I made my arrangements, unwillingly enough, for leaving London early the next day. Towards evening Pesca looked in, on his way to a dinner-party, to bid me good-bye.

When I was left alone again nothing remained to be done but to walk to the Hampstead cottage and bid my mother and Sarah good-bye.

The heat had been painfully oppressive all day, and it was now a close and sultry night. My mother and sister had spoken so many last words, and had begged me to wait another five minutes so many times, that it was nearly midnight when the servant locked the garden-gate behind me. The moon was full, and I decided to take the longest and loneliest road home so as to spend as much time as possible in the fresh air. I was walking along, thinking of the future and imagining as well as I could my coming life at Limmeridge House, when I was suddenly startled by the

由其最后作出一切必要的安排。这些条文后面，是帕斯卡波特兰广场的东家的姓名住址。

为我介绍的这一职位，确实很吸引人。我知道如果能获得介绍的这个职位，对我来说这应当是十分幸运的了；然而，我就是莫名其妙地不愿意接受这份工作。只是帕斯卡、母亲和妹妹的劝说才最后使我克服了犹豫，同意将申请书送去。但是，我的心中依然是很疑惑的。

第二天早晨，我把我的证明文件寄给住在波特兰广场的教授的东家。四天之后我收到了一封信，信上说费尔利先生已经接受我的申请，并请我立即前往坎伯兰郡。

我很不乐意地打点了行装，准备第二天一早离开伦敦。傍晚帕斯卡来看我，他去赴一个宴会，顺便到我这里为我送行。

当又剩下我一个人的时候，我没有别的事情好做，只有去汉普斯特德小屋向母亲和莎拉告别。

白天一整天都热得让人喘不过气来，这会儿天晚了，更是暑气逼人。母亲和妹妹临别时叮嘱了我许多话，老是让我再多待上五分钟，所以，等仆人在我背后关上院门时，几乎已近午夜了。这时，天上的月亮很圆。为了能尽量多消磨些时间来呼吸新鲜空气，我决定走一条最远而又最僻静的路回家。我一边走着，一边想着未来，想象着我即将要在利默里奇过的生活。突然我

touch of a hand laid lightly on my shoulder from behind me.

I turned on the instant, with my fingers tightening round the handle of my stick.

There in the middle of the road stood the figure of a woman dressed from head to foot in white. I was far too seriously startled by the suddenness with which this extraordinary apparition stood before me, in the dead of night and in that lonely place, to ask what she wanted. The strange woman spoke first.

"Is that the road to London?" she said.

I looked attentively at her. It was nearly one o'clock, and all that I could see was a young face, rather sharp about the cheeks and chin, with sad eyes, nervous lips and light yellow hair. I altogether failed to guess what sort of woman she was, and how she came to be out alone in the high-road, an hour after midnight.

"Did you hear me?" she said, still quietly and rapidly, "I asked if that was the way to London."

"Yes," I replied. "That is the way. You must excuse my not answering you before. I was rather startled by your sudden appearance in the road. How can I help you?"

"I have only been in London once before," she went on, "and I know nothing about it. Could you show me where to get a carriage. I have a friend in London who will be glad to receive me. I want nothing else. Will you promise?"

I agreed to do my best and we set our face towards London, walking on together in the first quiet hours of the new day, I and this woman, whose name, whose character, whose story, whose objects in life, whose very presence by my

感到背后有只手轻轻地搭在我的肩上，不由得吓了一跳。

我立刻转过身，手指紧握住我的手杖。

路中央站着一个人，从头到脚穿着一件白色的衣服。在那寂静的夜里，在那荒凉的地方，看到这样一个奇怪的幽灵突然出现在我的面前，我感到很吃惊，以至于一时没法反问她要做什么。倒是这个古怪的女人先开口。

“这是去伦敦的路吗？”她问道。

我仔细地打量着她。那时已经将近一点钟，我所能看到的只是一张年轻的脸，瘦削的颧骨和下巴，忧伤的眼睛，神经质的嘴唇和浅黄色的头发。我完全猜不出她是什么样的女人，更猜不出她怎么会在深夜一点钟独自来到这条大路上的。

“您听见我说话了吗？”她仍旧急促地低声说，“我问这是不是去伦敦的路？”

“是的，”我回答说，“是这条路。请您原谅我刚才没有回答您。因为您这样出现在路上使我非常惊讶，我能为您做些什么呢？”

“我以前只去过一次伦敦，”她继续说，“现在对那儿的情况一点儿也不了解。您能不能告诉我到哪儿能叫一辆马车，我在伦敦有一个朋友，她会乐意接待我的，其他我什么都不需要了。您能答应我吗？”

我答应尽力而为。于是在寂静的凌晨一点钟，我们——我，还有这个女人一起向伦敦走去，而那时她的姓名、她的身份、她的来历、她生活的目的、

side, at that moment, were fathomless mysteries to me.

"I want to ask you something," she said suddenly. "Do you know many people in London?"

"Yes, a great many."

"Many men of rank and title?"

"Some," I said, after a moment's silence.

"Many men of the rank of Baronet?"

"Why do you ask?"

"Because I hope, for my own sake, there is one Baronet that you don't know."

"Can you tell me about his name?"

"I can't, I daren't, I forget myself when I mention it." She spoke loudly and almost fiercely, "But tell me which of them you know."

I could not refuse her request and I mentioned three names.

"Ah! you don't know him," she said, with a sigh of relief. "Are you a man of rank and title yourself?"

"Far from it. I am only a drawing-master."

"Not a man of rank and title," she repeated to herself. "Thank God! I may trust him."

We walked on as I turned her words over in my mind. Some baronet must have done her a great wrong, but she would not explain further. We had reached the first houses before she spoke again.

"Do you live in London?" she said.

"Yes. But tomorrow I shall be away from London for some time. I am going

她到我身边的用意，这一切对我而言都是个深不可测的谜。

“我想问您一些事情，”她突然说，“您在伦敦认识许多人吗？”

“是的，有许多熟人。”

“都是有身份有爵位的吗？”

“有几个是的。”我沉默了一会儿说。

“您认识不少准男爵吗？”

“您为什么要打听这个？”

“因为，为自己考虑，我希望有位准男爵您不认识。”

“您能把他的名字告诉我吗？”

“我不能，我不敢，我刚才只是因为不小心才提到了这件事。”这时她几乎是恶狠狠地大声说，“请您告诉我，您认识的是几个什么样的人？”

我无法拒绝她的请求，于是告诉了她三个名字。

“啊！您不认识他呀，”她舒了一口气，“您也是一位有身份有爵位的贵人吗？”

“差得远呢。我不过是一名画师罢了。”

“不是一位有爵位的贵人，”她自言自语地重复了一遍，“谢天谢地！这样我可以信任他了。”

我们继续赶路，我心里反复揣摩着她所说的话。一定是某个准男爵对她很坏，但她不愿意继续向我解释些什么了。一直走到我们看得见房屋的时候，她又开口说了起来。

“您是住在伦敦吗？”她问。

“是的。但是明天我就要离开伦敦一个时期。我要到乡下去。”

into the country."

"Where?" she asked. "North or south?"

"North—to Cumberland."

"Cumberland!" she repeated the word tenderly. "Ah! I wish I was going there too. I was once happy in Cumberland."

"Perhaps you were born in the beautiful Lake country." I asked.

"No," she answered. "I was born in Hampshire; but I once went to school for a little while in Cumberland, in Limmeridge village."

I was astonished and stopped so suddenly that she asked anxiously if I had heard someone calling us.

"No, no. I was only struck by the name of Limmeridge House. I heard it mentioned by some Cumberland people a few days since."

"Ah! Not my people. Mrs Fairlie is dead, but she was kind to me once. "

After we had walked on a little farther, I saw a cab stop at a house near us and I called the driver. As she was getting in, I entreated her to let me see her set down safely at her destination, but she refused, exclaiming that she was now quite safe. "Let him drive on till I stop him. Thank you—oh! thank you, thank you!"

My hand was on the cab door. She caught it in hers, kissed it, and pushed it away. The cab drove off at the same moment and the sound of the wheels grew fainter in the distance. The woman in white was gone.

Ten minutes or more had passed. I was still on the same side of the way. At one moment I found myself doubting the reality of my own adventure; at another I was perplexed and distressed by an uneasy sense of having done wrong. My